

Message Text

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SUBJ: INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR SHANNON

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PAGE THREE STORY FROM IRISH INDEPENDENT JULY 28 RESULTING FROM AN INTEVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR SHANNON.

2. BEGIN TEXT THE NEW AMERICAN ENVOY, MR. WILLIAM V. SHANNON, HAS GIVEN AN UNDERTAKING TO WORK FOR AN EASING OF THE VIRTUAL BAN ON IRISH EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES.

3. THIS PROMISE, GIVEN IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO THE "IRISH INDEPENDENT", IS IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF SOME RECENT EVIDENCE THAT THE HISTORIC OUTWARD FLOW OF WORKERS, PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT IN RECENT YEARS, IS RESUMING.

4. MR. SHANNON (49), WHOSE OWN FATHER AND MOTHER EMIGRATED FROM WEST CLARE IN THE EARLY 1900S, IS VERY SYMPATHETIC TO THE DEMAND FOR BIGGER IMMIGRATION QUOTAS.

5. FROM 1945 EMIGRATION ZOOMED UNTIL 1965, WHEN NEW U.S. LAW MADE IMMIGRATION SO DIFFICULT. THERE WAS AN ANNUAL AVERAGE FLOW OF UP TO 17,000 FROM NORTH AND SOUTH. THAT IS NOW ONLY 500 TO
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700.

6. MR. SHANNON SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT MORE IRISH PEOPLE WOULD BE LET IN AND PROMISED: "I HOPE SUCH MODEST INFLUENCE AS I HAVE WILL BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN THAT DIRECTION."

7. HE POINTED OUT: "THE LAW AS IT WAS REFORMED IN 1965 HAS

WORKED MORE SEVERELY ON IRELAND THAN THE CONGRESS, OR PRESIDENT JOHNSON, WHO SIGNED IT, HAD ANY INTENTION, OR EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD."

8. MR. SHANNON EXPLAINED THAT THE AIM WAS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION FAVOURING NORTH WEST EUROPE, INCLUDING IRELAND (THE SOURCE OF ORIGINAL IMMIGRATION) AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EASTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE (THE SOURCE OF MORE RECENT IMMIGRATION).

9. BUT, DESPITE HIS DESIRE TO HAVE MORE IRISH IMMIGRATION AND THE LEVERAGE IRISH-AMERICANS HAD THROUGH THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, MR. THOMAS P. O'NEILL, AND SENATORS EDWARD KENNEDY AND PATRICK MOYNIHAN, HE SAW DIFFICULTIES.

10. MR. SHANNON SAID THAT OTHER COUNTRIES, LIKE THE ITALIANS, POLES AND GREEKS, HAD ETHNIC POLITICIANS AS WELL. THEY NOW HAD THREE JAPANESE-AMERICAN SENATORS -- TWO FROM HAWAII AND ONE FROM CALIFORNIA. THEY ALSO HAD A LEBANESE ARAB SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA.

11. HE POINTED OUT: "THAT IS WHAT MAKES EASING IMMIGRATION SUCH A DIFFICULT PROBLEM. THE OTHER REASON IS UNEMPLOYMENT. IF WE COULD BRING UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN IN THE U.S. FROM SAY 7 PER CENT TO 1 OR 2 PER CENT, THEN THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN REVISING THE LAW."

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12. THEY HAD LARGE NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED IN THE LABOURING, HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS AND SEMI-SKILLED CATEGORIES. IF ALL THE IRISH WHO WANTED TO EMIGRATE WERE NUCLEAR PHYSICISTS, OR THE LIKE, THEY COULD GET IN MORE EASILY.

13. MR. SHANNON SAID THAT ONE OF HIS STAFF WAS HAVING TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF IRISH DOCTORS IN RELATION TO THE VIRTUAL CLAMP-DOWN ON FOREIGN MEDICAL MEN GETTING JOBS, IRISH DOCTORS HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING AGAINST THIS.

14. HE HOPED TO BE BRIEFED ON THESE TALKS SHORTLY. THE BAN, AS HE UNDERSTOOD IT, WAS DESIGNED TO PREVENT DOCTORS, BADLY-NEEDED IN PLACES LIKE ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA, FROM EMIGRATING TO THE STATES, WHERE THEY COULD EARN UP TO 10 TIMES MORE PAY.

15. APART FROM HELPING IRISH PEOPLE WANTING TO WORK IN THE STATES, MR. SHANNON MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WOULD BE ONE OF HIS AMBITIONS AS AMBASSADOR TO HELP EASE OUR UNEMPLOYMENT, NOW 109,000.

16. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, NOT ONLY IN THE REPUBLIC, BUT IN THE NORTH.

17. MR. SHANNON, AS A FORMER NEWSPAPERMAN AND WASHINGTON-BASED LEADER WRITER FOR THE "NEW YORK TIMES" FOR THE PAST 13 YEARS, BELIEVES THAT IRELAND AND THE U.S. COULD BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT EACH OTHER.

18. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT THE GREAT AMERICAN DAILIES -- LIKE THE "NEW YORK TIMES" -- SHOULD HAVE CORRESPONDENTS IN DUBLIN OR BELFAST, AND NOT COVER IRELAND OUT OF LONDON.

19. BUT HE POINTED OUT: "I WOULD SAY THT THE CONVERSE IS ALSO TRUE. NO IRISH PAPER MAINTAINS A CORRESPONDENT IN WASHINGTON ... WASHINGTON OPINION, LIKE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, WOULD BE EASIER TO UNCLASSIFIED

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EXPLAIN TO IRISH PEOPLE, IF THERE WERE A CORRESPONDENT."

20. THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO THE CONFUSION CAUSED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S REPORTED INTEREST IN A NORTHERN POLITICAL INITIATIVE. IN FACT, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS ONLY WILLING TO HELP ON A HUMANITARIAN NON-PARTISAN BASIS.

21. MR. SHANNON ADDED THAT HE APPRECIATED THE COST FACTORS IN MAINTAINING FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. IT TAKES 50,000 DOLLARS PER YEAR TO MAINTAIN A U.S. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT ABROAD. INCLUDING SALARY, EXPENSES AND OFFICE RENTAL. END QUOTE SHANNON

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